

Message Text

PAGE 01 BUENOS 07757 01 OF 02 241832Z

51

ACTION ARA-20

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4022

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 7757

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, EAID, PINT, AR

SUBJ: POST-AIFLD LABOR PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

REF: STATE 195274; BA 7285

SUMMARY: FOLLOWING ARE THE MISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE BEST MEANS TO ASSURE A MEANINGFUL LABOR PRESENCE IN ARGENTINA FOLLOWING DEC 31 AIFLD CONTRACT TERMINATION. RECOMMENDATIONS CALL FOR PROGRAM ACTIVITIES BY PRIVATE US LABOR, INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATIONS, AND US GOVERNMENT. JUSTIFICATION FOR ALL PROGRAMS IS POLITICAL. END SUMMARY.

1. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, AIFLD PROGRAM EXPIRES DEC 31. DURING AIFLD'S STAY IN ARGENTINA IT HAS MADE A MEANINGFUL CONTRIBUTION TO US POLICY OBJECTIVES IN THE LABOR FIELD. SPECIFICALLY, ITS ACTIVITIES HAVE HELPED TO PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MORE DEMOCRATIC LABOR MOVEMENT, INCREASE ARGENTINE PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRATICALLY-ORIENTED INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND IMPROVE RELATIONS BETWEEN ARGENTINE AND US LABOR. SEVERAL LABOR LEADERS, WHO HAVE COLLABORATED WITH AIFLD AND WHO ARE AWARE OF THE CONTRACT TERMINATION, HAVE COMMENTED FAVORABLY ON AIFLD'S WORK, AND THEIR OPINIONS, AS WELL AS THOSE OF OTHER LABOR LEADERS AND THE AIFLD CPD, WERE CONSIDERED BY THE MISSION IN THE FORMULATION OF THESE RECOMMENDATIONS. AIFLD CPD HAS BEEN ABSENT FROM COUNTRY SINCE OCT 15, THEREFORE LAST MINUTE SUGGESTIONS BY AIFLD WERE NOT FORTHCOMING AND COULD NOT BE CONSIDERED. CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BUENOS 07757 01 OF 02 241832Z

HOWEVER, AIFLD POSITION IS WELL KNOWN, AND IT WAS GIVEN FULL CONSIDERATION.

2. WITH THE TERMINATION OF THIS CONTRACT, WE BELIEVE THAT

THE NEED FOR CONTINUED USG FUNDING OF AIFLD PROGRAMS IN ARGENTINA HAS ENDED. ARGENTINE UNIONS NOW HAVE MORE THAN ADEQUATE FINANCIAL, INTELLECTUAL, AND HUMAN RESOURCES TO CARRY OUT THEIR OWN PROGRAMS IN TRADE-UNION EDUCATION AND THE SOCIAL PROJECTS FIELD. THEREFORE, DEVELOPMENTAL GROUNDS CAN NO LONGER BE JUSTIFIED FOR THE CONTINUANCE OF A US LABOR PRESENCE.

3. CLOSER US RELATIONSHIPS WITH ARGENTINE LABOR AND A MORE ACTIVE, CONSTRUCTIVE ARGENTINE LABOR PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL SPHERE ARE IMPORTANT CASP OBJECTIVES. THEY ARE EVEN MORE RELEVANT NOW IN VIEW OF ORGANIZED LABOR'S KEY ROLE IN THE PRESENT DAY ARGENTINE BODY POLITIC. THEREFORE, THE MISSION BELIEVES THERE ARE STRONG POLITICAL GROUNDS ON WHICH TO RECOMMEND A CONTINUED LABOR PRESENCE IN ARGENTINA, AND THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS ARE DIRECTED TOWARDS THAT END. WE BELIEVE THAT THREE-PRONGED APPROACH, COMBINING ACTIVITIES OF THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT, INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATIONS, AND THE USG, WILL BEST FAVOR THE ATTAINMENT OF THOSE OBJECTIVES. SPECIFIC RECOMMENDED PROGRAM ACTIVITIES FOLLOW.

4. INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION ACTIVITIES. WE BELIEVE THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE SECRETARIATS (ITS) SHOULD BE UTILIZED AS THE PRIMARY VEHICLE FOR MAINTAINING A US ORIENTED LABOR PRESENCE IN THE POST-AIFLD PERIOD. THE ITSES HAVE WORKED LONG AND WELL IN ARGENTINA, THEREBY MITIGATING TO A LARGE DEGREE THE ISOLATIONISM OF THE NATIONAL CENTRAL, THE CGT. THE THIRTEEN ITSES OPERATING IN ARGENTINA HAVE 64 ARGENTINE UNION AFFILIATES, WITH A CLAIMED MEMBERSHIP OF OVER 1.9 MILLION, REPRESENTING OVER 60 PERCENT OF ARGENTINE ORGANIZED LABOR. INCLUDED IN THE LIST OF ITS AFFILIATES ARE ALL THE MAJOR ARGENTINE UNIONS. BECAUSE OF THE STRONG POSITION OF AMERICAN UNIONS WITHIN MOST ITSES, WHICH INVOLVES SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND POSITIONS OF LEADERSHIP, THEY ARE ORIENTED TOWARDS US LABOR. NEVERTHELESS, THEY ARE NOT VIEWED AS US DOMINATED ORGANIZATIONS, BUT RATHER AS TRULY CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BUENOS 07757 01 OF 02 241832Z

INDEPENDENT INTERNATIONAL LABOR ENTITIES. THEREFORE THE ITSES, UNENCUMBERED BY IDENTIFICATION WITH THE US OR USG POLICY, BUT FULLY ORIENTED TOWARDS THAT POLICY, CAN EXPLOIT TO THE FULLEST EXTEND POSSIBLE THE DEMONSTRATED ARGENTINE DESIRE TO EXPAND ITS INTERNATIONAL TIES AND ACTIVITIES, THEREBY PROMOTING A CONSTRUCTIVE ARGENTINE PARTICIPATION IN US SUPPORTED INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATIONS. THE POLITICAL ADVANTAGES ACCRUING FROM UNION TO UNION CONTACT IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT WOULD BE AN IMPORTANT ITS CONTRIBUTION TO US POLICY OBJECTIVES.

5. TO ENABLE THE ITSES TO EXPAND THEIR ACTIVITIES WE RECOMMEND THAT INCREASED FUNDING BE PROVIDED UNDER TASK ORDER

#598/2. WE BELIEVE AID FUNDING FOR THESE ACTIVITIES CAN BE JUSTIFIED ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A HEMISPHERE-WIDE, DEMOCRATICALLY ORIENTED LABOR MOVEMENT MUST NECESSARILY INCLUDE CONTACT WITH ALL NATIONAL LABOR MOVEMENTS, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER OR NOT ANY PARTICULAR COUNTRY QUALIFIES FOR BILATERAL US ASSISTANCE. SHOULD THIS RECOMMENDATION BE APPROVED, WE WILL MAKE MORE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS LATER ON AREAS WHERE WE BELIEVE SUCH ACTIVITIES WILL BE MOST PRODUCTIVE. TO MAINTAIN THE ITSES REPUTATION AS INDEPENDENT INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, WE RECOMMEND THAT THE ITSES THEMSELVES BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FULL DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR OWN PROGRAMS AND THAT USG INFLUENCE AND/OR CONTROL, EITHER BY WASHINGTON OR THE MISSION, BE AS MINIMAL AS POSSIBLE. HOWEVER, WE SUGGEST ITSES CONSIDER UTILIZATION EXCELLENT EX-AIFLD STAFF MEMBERS AS LOCAL ACTIVISTS UNDER PROPOSED EXPANDED PROGRAM.

6. AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES. GIVEN THE HIGH DEGREE OF SOPHISTICATION OF THE ARGENTINE LABOR MOVEMENT, ITS SENSITIVE NATIONALISTIC TENDENCIES, AND ITS OBVIOUS INTEREST IN BEING ACCEPTED AS AN EQUAL OF LABOR MOVEMENTS OF OTHER DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, WE BELIEVE THAT THE INTERESTS OF THE USG AND OF THE US LABOR MOVEMENT WILL BE GREATLY ENHANCED BY THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIRECT AFL-CIO CONTACT WITH THE CGT. DAILY CONTACT BY AN AFL-CIO OFFICIAL WITH HIS ARGENTINE COUNTERPARTS WOULD BE THE BEST POSSIBLE MEANS OF ESTABLISHING CLOSER RAPPORT WITH THE ARGENTINE LABOR MOVEMENT AND FURTHER IMPROVING OUR OVERALL RELATIONSHIPS WITH CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BUENOS 07757 01 OF 02 241832Z

THAT IMPORTANT SECTOR OF ARGENTINE SOCIETY. THEREFORE, WE ONCE AGAIN STRONGLY URGE THE AFL-CIO TO CONSIDER ESTABLISHMENT OF A WESTERN HEMISPHERE OFFICE IN BUENOS AIRES.

7. WE BELIEVE IT ESSENTIAL THAT FUTURE US ORGANIZED LABOR RELATIONSHIPS WITH ARGENTINE LABOR BE CARRIED OUT ON A STRICT UNION TO UNION BASIS, WHICH REQUIRES THAT PRIVATE FUNDING BE USED FOR THOSE ACTIVITIES. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD ARGENTINE LABOR FEEL THAT THE US LABOR MOVEMENT IS AN EXTENSION OF THE USG, OR THAT IT OPERATES UNDER USG POLICY RESTRICTIONS. IF THE AFL-CIO CONCLUDED THAT SUCH A REGIONAL OFFICE SHOULD BE OPERATED BY AIFLD RATHER THAN THE AFL-CIO ITSELF, WE BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD HAVE BE OPERATED WITH THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF PRIVATE AFL-CIO OR AIFLD FUNDS. EVEN THEN, THE BENEFIT TO BE ACCRUED FROM SUCH AN OFFICE WOULD BE CONSIDERABLY LESS AS AIFLD IS, AND WILL UNDOUBTEDLY REMAIN, IDENTIFIED AS A US GOVERNMENT SPONSORED ORGANIZATION WORKING IN A POLITICALLY SENSITIVE AREA.

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PAGE 01 BUENOS 07757 02 OF 02 241836Z

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ACTION ARA-20

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BUENOS AIRES 7757

8. US GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES. THE MAJOR THRUST OF THE USG PROGRAM SHOULD BE DIRECTED TOWARDS INCREASED CONTACT BETWEEN US AND ARGENTINE LABOR LEADERS. WE RECOMMEND, THEREFORE, THAT CU/ARA REGIONAL FUNDING BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR AN EXPANDED CODE 210 LABOR EXCHANGE PROGRAM, TO PERMIT, ON A YEARLY BASIS, AT LEAST TWENTY LABOR LEADERS TO VISIT THE US AND TEN STAGS TO VISIT ARGENTINA. BA A-46 OF FEB 14, 1972 GAVE FULL JUSTIFICATION FOR SUCH A PROGRAM. WITH SLIGHT MODIFICATIONS IN THE KEY AREAS OF EFFORT AND THE LIST OF LABOR LEADERS MENTIONED THEREIN, WE BELIEVE THE PROGRAM SUBMITTED IS STILL VALID. IT STRESSES THE DESIRABILITY OF HANDLING THE PROGRAM ALONG UNION TO UNION LINES, I.E., WITH THE AFL-CIO DESIGNATED AS THE OFFICIAL HOST, AND WITH ONLY MINIMUM USG PARTICIPATION IN THE INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMS. THE PROGRAM WOULD BE COORDINATED AND IMPEEEMNTED WITH THE FULL PARTICIPATION OF THE AFL-CIO REGIONAL OFFICE, SHOULD ONE BE ESTABLISHED.

9. WE RECOMMEND THAT THE US LABOR DEPARTMENT REACTIVATE THE POSTPONED SLAM PROJECT FOR CY 1974. WE BELIEVE THAT OUR POLITICAL/ECONOMIC INTERESTS WILL ALSO BE SERVED IS ARGENTINE LABOR LEADERS CAN ATTEND SELECTED AID-SPONSORED, REGIONALLY FUNDED SEMINARS AFFECTING INTERNATIONAL MATTERS, SUCH AS TRANSPORT AND MULTI-NATIONAL CORPORATIONS. THEREFORE, WE RECOMMEND THAT AID CONTINUE TO RESPOND FAVORABLY TO MISSION REQUESTS TO SPONSOR ARGENTINES AT SELECTED SEMINARS. WHENEVER APPROPRIATE, AND TO THE FULLEST EXTEND POSSIBLE, USIS AND USAID PUBLICATION AND INFORMATION SERVICES WILL BE UTILIZED IN THE CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BUENOS 07757 02 OF 02 241836Z

FURTHERANCE OF OUR POLICY OBJECTIVES.

10. THE ABOVE REPRESENTS THE MISSION'S CONSIDERED JUDGEMENT ON THE BEST WAY TO ATTAIN OUR POLICY OBJECTIVES IN THE LABOR FIELD. IN THOE AREAS REQUIRING USG FUNDING WE REQUEST APPROVAL AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THOSE PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS ASAP. IN THOSE AREAS OUTSIDE USG DECISION MAKING AUTHORITY,

WE SUGGEST THAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS BE DISCUSSED PROMPTLY
AND FULLY WITH THE PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED.
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